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CERTIFICATE

This certificate is issued in support of an application for Patent registration in a country outside New Zealand pursuant to the Patents Act 1953 and the Regulations thereunder.

I hereby certify that annexed is a true copy of the Provisional Specification as filed on 22 October 2003 with an application for Letters Patent number 529080 made by KOHLER NEW ZEALAND LIMITED.

Dated 10 November 2004.

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Neville Harris

Neville Harris
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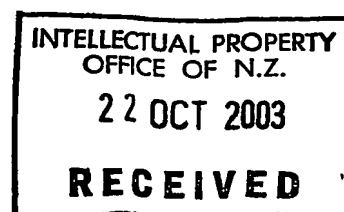


NEW ZEALAND
PATENTS ACT, 1953

PROVISIONAL SPECIFICATION

A BATH WITH INTERCHANGEABLE FITTINGS

We, KOHLER NEW ZEALAND LIMITED a New Zealand company of 133 Diana Drive, Glenfield, Auckland, New Zealand do hereby declare this invention to be described in the following statement:



FIELD OF INVENTION

The invention comprises an improved form of bath with one or more of an interchangeable neck pillow fitting and a fitting (or fittings) which deliver water on to the shoulders of a bather.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

A standard bath typically is filled generally with warm water, from taps or a mixer and spout, and is used for bathing.

A spa bath also incorporates an intake and a number of spa jets positioned in the bath side walls, and piping around the exterior of the bath, through which water is circulated from an intake to the jets in the side walls of the bath by one or more pumps. A spa bath provides the bather(s) with a more luxuriant bathing experience.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

It is an object of the invention to provide an improved or at least alternative form of bath, which further adds to the bathing experience.

In broad terms in one aspect the invention comprises a bath including:

in or associated with an upper wall or rim section of the bath at least one water connection,

a neck water outlet fitting interchangeably connectable to the water connection to direct a flow of water generally centrally on to the neck and/or upper back of a bather sitting against the adjacent bath wall, and

a shoulders water outlet fitting or fittings interchangeably connectable to the water connection to direct a flow of water on to the shoulders or front shoulder regions of a bather sitting against the adjacent bath wall.

The neck and shoulders fittings can be interchangeably connected to the water connection(s) of the bath provided for this purpose, which is/are typically positioned in one or more junction portions of the bath which each join a wall section of the bath which defines the bath cavity, with a surrounding rim section around the bath cavity, without the use of tools ie manually by a bather before using the bath, who may select which fitting to use, if any.

In a preferred form the shoulders fitting comprises two spaced apart water outlets which will in use direct a flow of water onto the shoulders and/or front upper body of a person sitting in the bath between the two shoulders outlets, against the bath wall. The two spaced water outlets may be provided by two separate fittings, one positioned so that it will in use direct a water flow onto the left-side upper body of the bather and the other positioned so that it will direct a water flow into the right-side of the upper body of the bather. Preferably the separate shoulder fittings are rotatably or pivotably mounted so that each may be pivoted to alter the angle of water flow, enabling a bather to optimise the water flow onto the bather. However in an alternative form the shoulders water outlet fitting may for example be arranged to direct a wide flow of water across the shoulders region of a bather, from behind. The water flow may be the bath water recirculated by one or more pumps such as the spa pump in the case of a spa bath or similar, or by another dedicated pump, or fresh warm (or cold) water (non-recirculated).

In a preferred form the neck water outlet fitting is associated with a pillow formed of a compressible material such as synthetic foam which may be fitted to a junction portion of the bath which joins a wall section of the bath which defines the bath cavity with a surrounding rim section around the bath cavity. The pillow includes one or more apertures through which water is delivered (through the pillow) onto the back of the neck and top of the back of a bather. Alternatively the pillow may be formed of a water permeable material or comprise a water permeable covering material.

A standard (single person) bath may include a water supply connection at one end of the bath only. A bath designed to accommodate two persons sitting in the bath against opposite ends of the bath may incorporate water supply connections at both ends of the bath. A bath designed to accommodate two persons sitting side by side may incorporate side by side water supply connections side by side. A spa bath or pool designed to accommodate up to three or more persons may incorporate water supply connections in accordance with the invention at a number of seating positions around the bath or pool. In this specification the term "bath" is intended to also include spa baths and spa pools, including and also known as spas, whirlpools, and jacuzzis.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The invention is further illustrated by the following description of an embodiment of a bath of the invention, which is described by way of example and without intending to be limiting. In the drawings:

Figure 1 is a perspective view generally showing a bath with interchangeable neck pillow and shoulders fittings of the invention,

Figure 2 is a close up view of the neck pillow fitting of the bath,

Figure 3 shows the pillow removed, but with a pipe fitting on which the neck pillow sits and which delivers water through the pillow in place,

Figure 4 is a view similar to Figure 3 but with the pipe fitting disconnected from two water connections in the bath,

Figure 5 is a close up view of the shoulders water outlet fittings of the bath, which also incorporate a neck pillow between,

Figure 6 is a view similar to Figure 5 but with one of the shoulders water outlet fittings disconnected from one of the water connections in the bath, and with the neck pillow removed,

Figure 7 is a view from above of one of the shoulders water fittings,

Figure 8 is a view of the shoulders water fitting from one end, and

Figure 9 is a cross-section view of one of the shoulders water fittings..

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF PREFERRED FORM

Referring to Figure 1, the bath shown therein is a spa bath designed to accommodate up to three persons. The bath incorporates an inlet from which water is drawn and a number of spa outlets or jets from which water is pumped back into the bath. Parts 1 of the walls of the bath are shaped so as to be comfortable for bathers sitting in the bath and leaning back against the side of the bath.

The bath is shown in Figure 1 configured with a neck water outlet fitting indicated generally at 2, a shoulders water outlet fitting at 3, and a simple pillow at 4. Referring particularly to Figures 4 and 6, water connections 5 are provided above each position 1, in the upper wall of the bath and in particular as shown in a junction portion of the bath which joins the wall of the bath with the surrounding rim section around the bath cavity.

When the bath is filled with water and a pump operated (which may be the spa pump of a spa bath or a separate pump), water is delivered from the water connections 5. Where a neck fitting is provided as at 2, water is directed by the neck fitting to flow onto the back of the neck and/or the upper back of a person sitting in the bath and leaning against the bath wall, and typically resting their head on the associated compressible pillow. The shoulders fittings 3 will deliver water onto the shoulders and/or front upper body of a bather. The neck and shoulders fittings are interchangeable they may be unplugged from and swapped between the water connections 5. Alternatively the neck and/or

shoulders fittings at one or more of the bathing position(s) maybe removed altogether and optionally replaced with a simple pillow. For example in the case of a bath for two persons having a bathing position at either end, two neck pillows/fittings 2 may be provided at either end of the bath or alternatively two shoulders fittings 3, or neck fittings at one end and shoulder fittings at the other. In a three or four person bath or spa, whirlpool or Jacuzzi, the neck and or shoulder fittings of each bathing position are similarly interchangeable or removable. Preferably the water supply connections 5 each incorporate a one way valve which is normally closed to prevent water from flowing, and which is opened (only) when a neck fitting or shoulders fitting is plugged into the water supply connection.

Referring in particular to Figures 2, 3 and 4, the neck fitting in the preferred form comprises an optional pillow 7 formed for example of a compressible material such as synthetic foam, and a pipe fitting 8 with water outlets 9, and a plug fitting 10 at either end which enables the pipe fitting to be connected to the bath by plugging its either end 10 into water outlets 5 as shown in Figure 3. The pillow 7 is then placed over the pipe fitting 8. The pillow 7 incorporates an aperture 13 through which water is in use delivered, which will gently hit the back of the neck and upper back of the bather (depending on the height of the bather).

Referring to Figures 1, 4 and 5, to provide shoulders fittings a pillow 7a is optionally provided which may again be formed from a synthetic foam material for example, and on either side of the pillow are mounted left and right shoulders water fittings 15 including outlets 16, which are also when in place connected to the water connections 5 so that they will in use direct a flow of water onto the shoulders and/or upper body of a bather sitting in the bath, on both the left and right sides as shown. Preferably the fittings 15 provide water outlets 16 which are elongate in shape as shown so that the flow of water from each fitting 15 is wider than it is deep, or laminar, so that when the water flows impact the shoulders of a bather they will cover and warm as much of the bathers upper body exposed above the water in the bath, as possible. It has been found optimal for achieving a flat laminar flow that the slot-shaped water outlets have a slightly larger dimension at either end of the slot relative to the centre width of the slot.

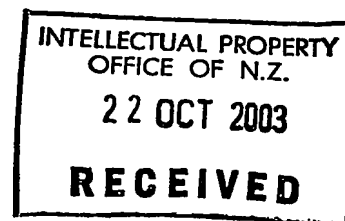
Alternatively however the outlets 16 may comprise a number of smaller elongate or circular outlets for example.

Figures 7 to 9 show one form of a single fitting 15 by way of example. The fitting which has a hollow interior also has a hollow mounting neck 20 which can removably plug into a water supply connection 5 shown in cross-section and separate from the bath wall. A user can pivot the fitting 15 by pushing or pulling the top of the fitting. A pipe (not shown) from the water pump of the bath or alternatively a separate pump, connects to the lower end 5a of the part 5 and one or more O- rings at 21 and 22 seal between the mounting neck 20 and the water connection 5.

In the bath shown by way of example each fitting 15 can pivot inwardly around its mounting neck 20 in water outlet 5, which enables a bather sitting in the bath to perfect the aim of the water flow onto the bathers upper body. In an alternative form the shoulders water fittings similar to those shown may be fixed rather than having the ability to be pivoted by a bather as described.

Preferably the shoulders outlet fittings are shaped so that they blend smoothly into the shape of the bath as shown.

The foregoing describes the invention including a preferred forms thereof. Alterations and modifications as will be obvious to those skilled in the art are intended to be incorporated in the scope hereof.



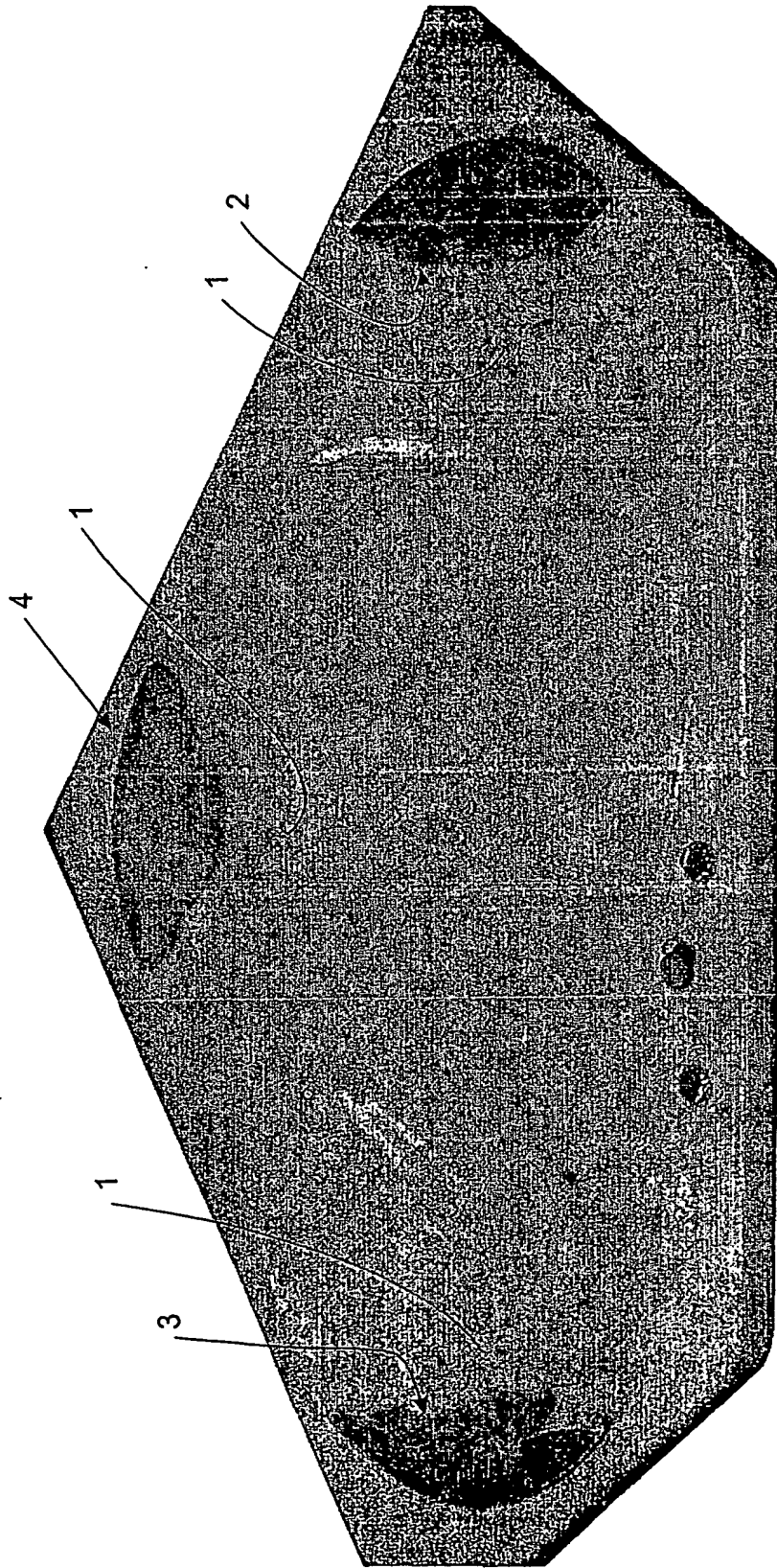


FIGURE 1

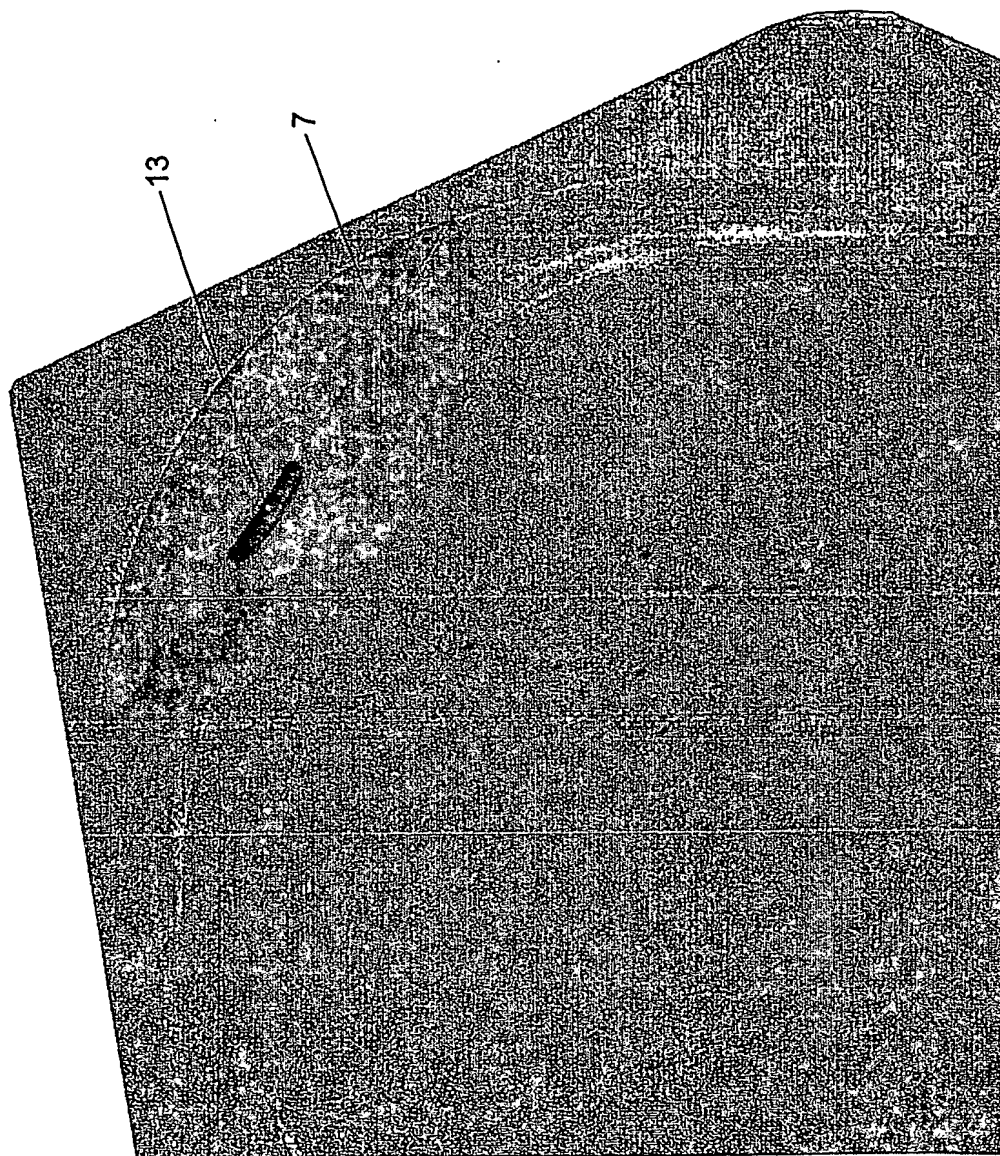


FIGURE 2

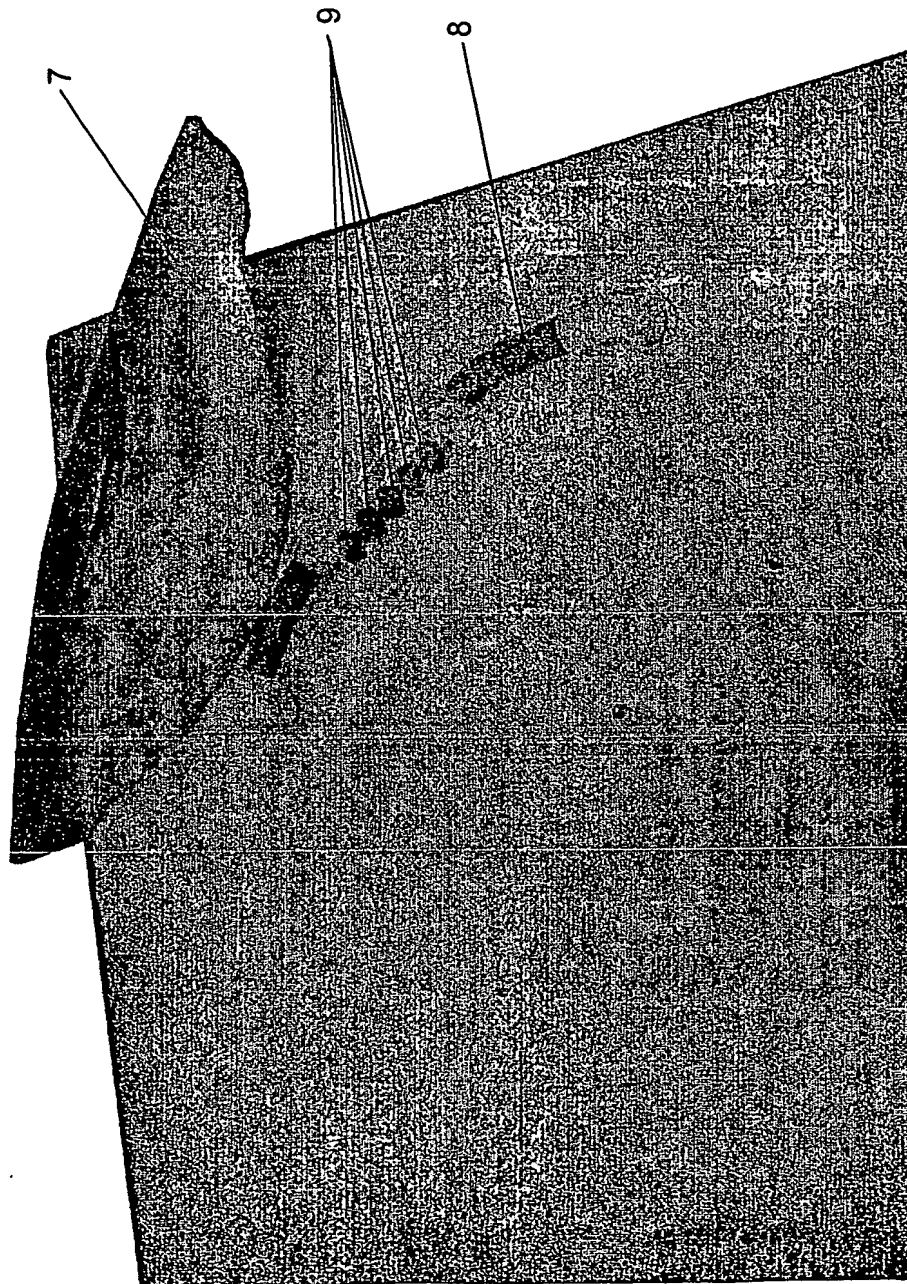


FIGURE 3

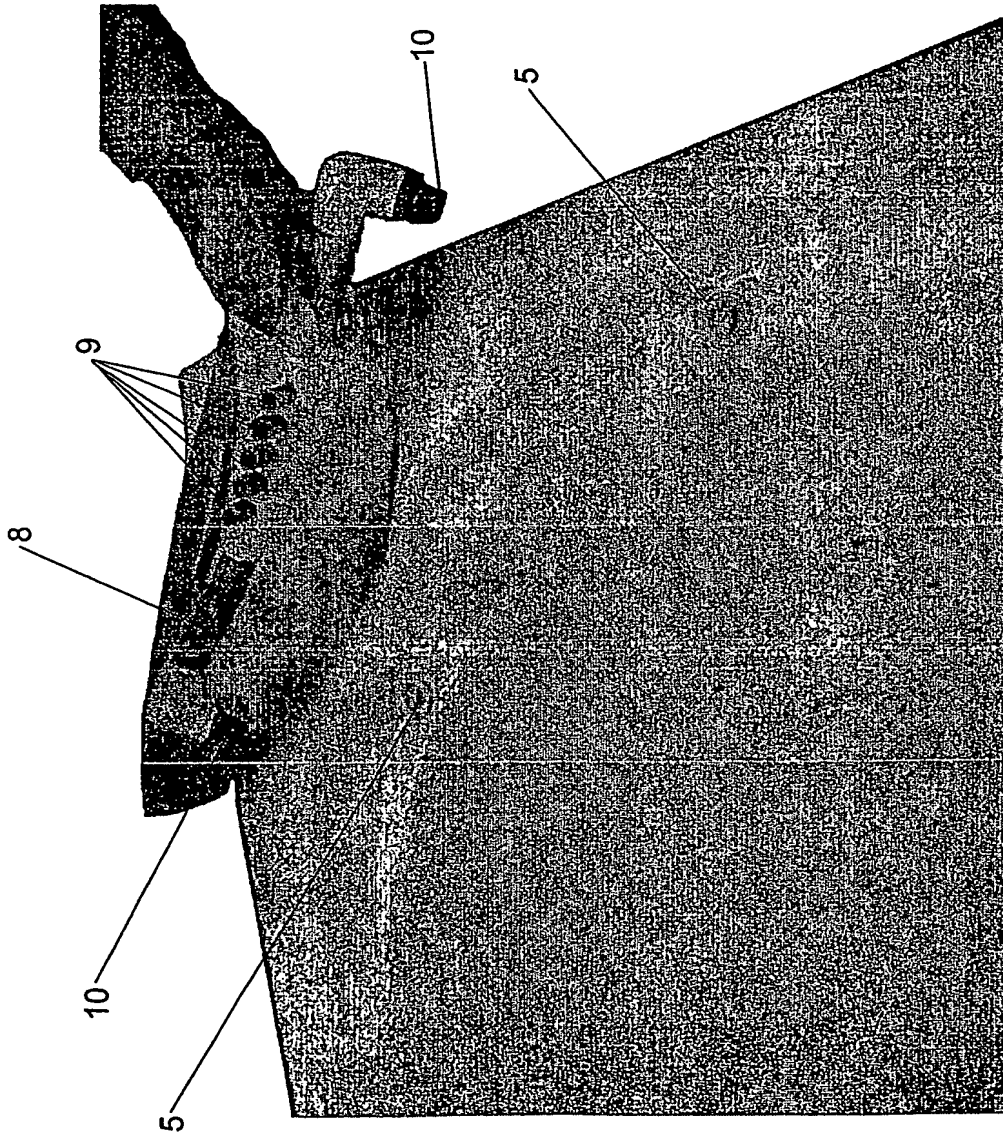


FIGURE 4

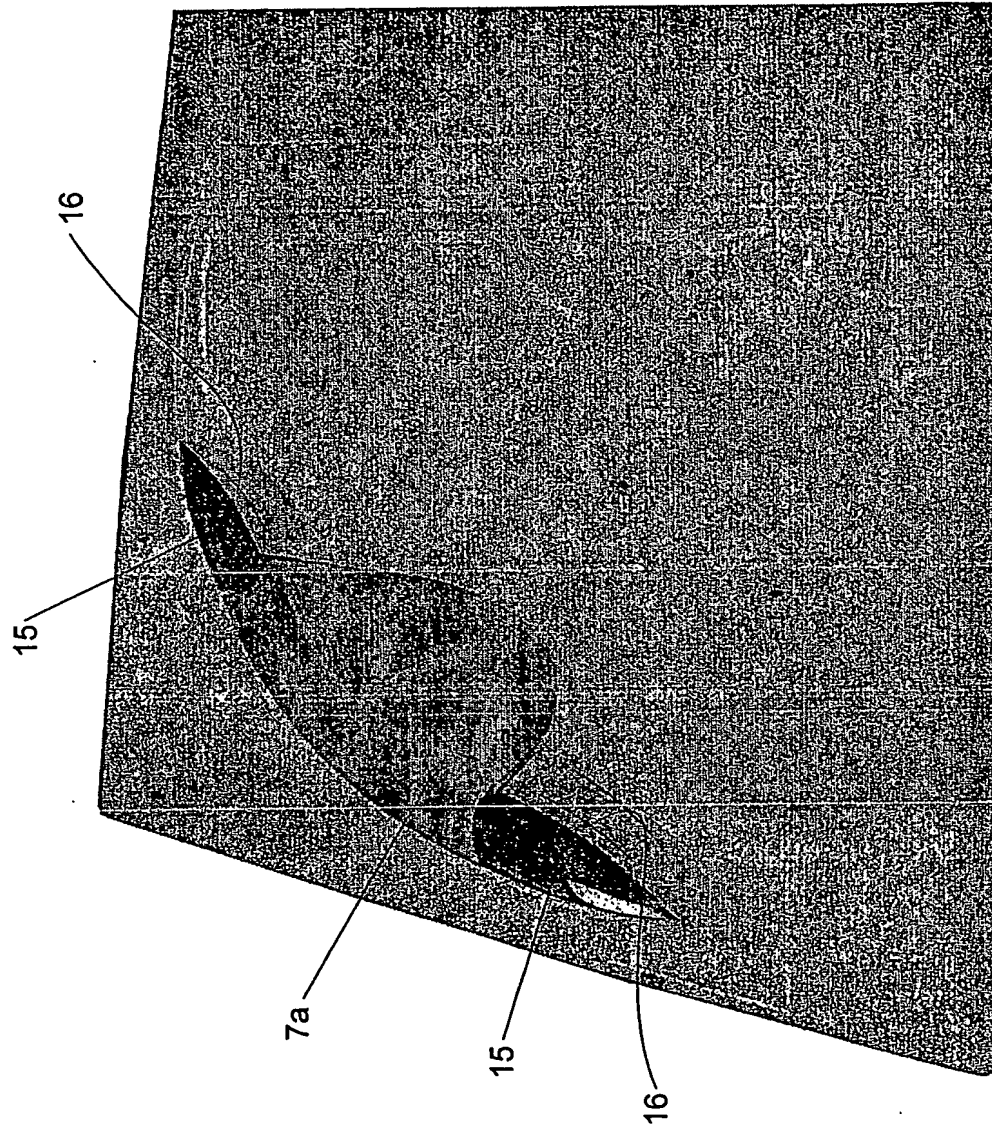


FIGURE 5

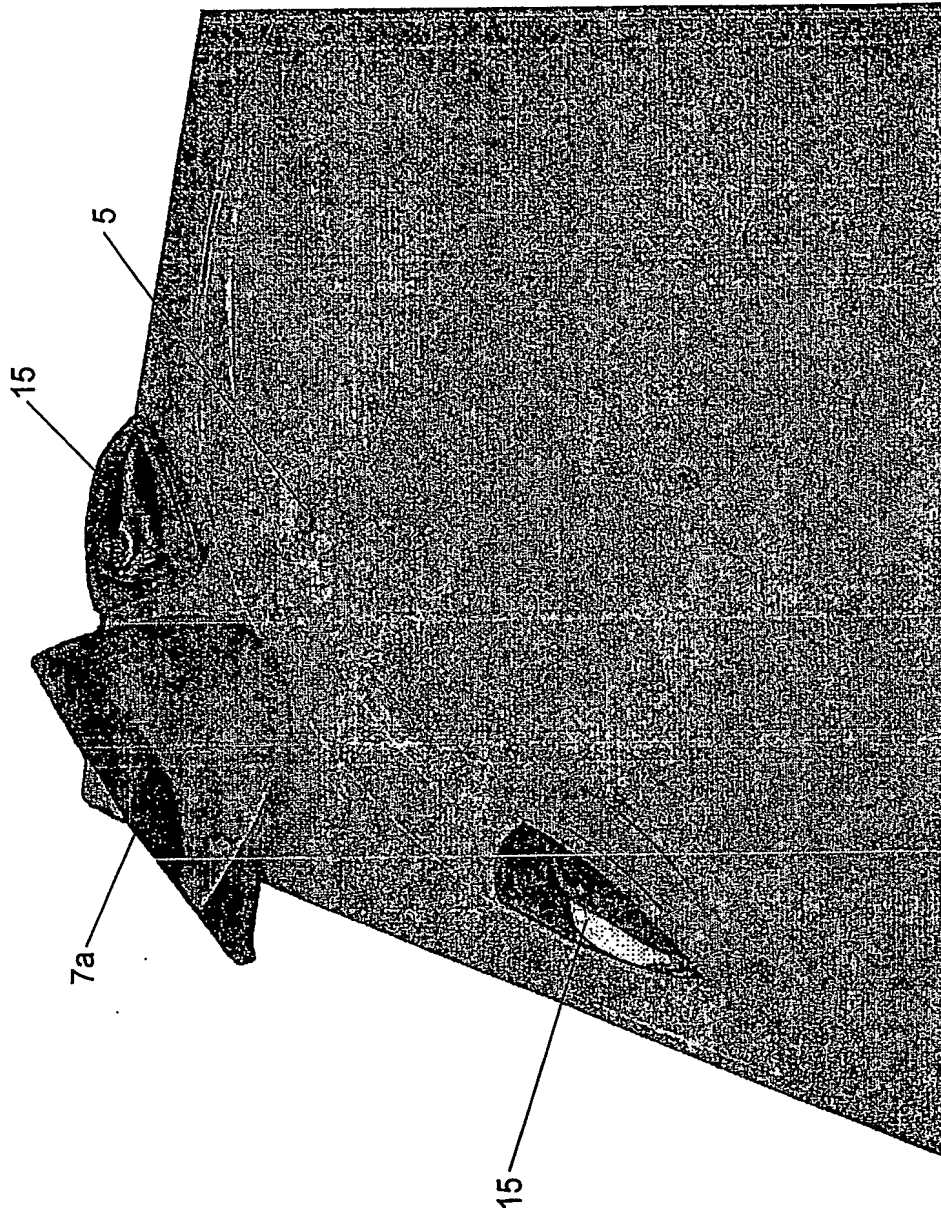
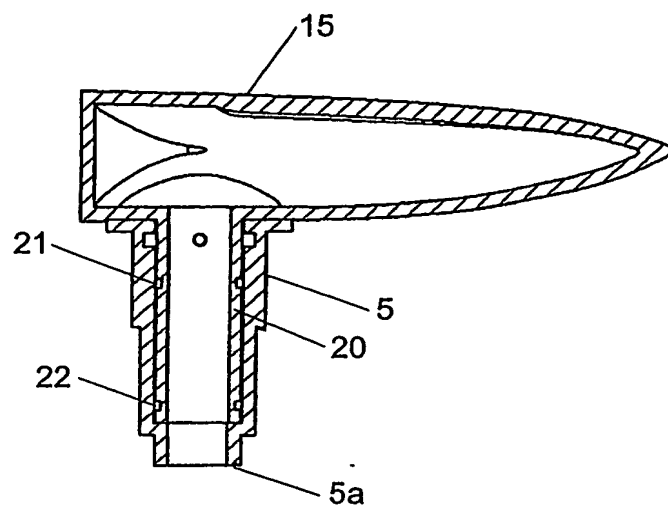
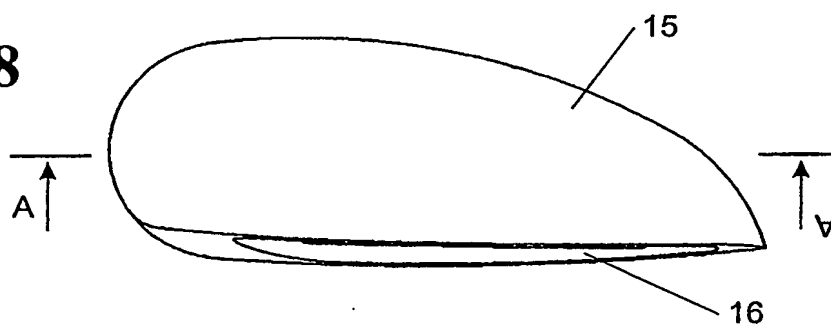
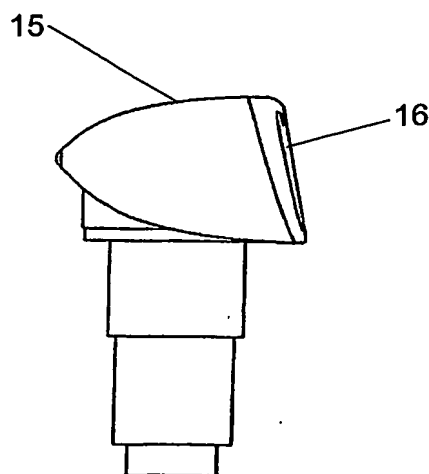


FIGURE 6

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FIGURE 7**FIGURE 8****FIGURE 9**

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